

## **Five Years of Democracy; a personal View**

17<sup>th</sup> March is a historic day at least for me, I have not gained anything personal in these five years except few more grey hair and an odd inch of belly. My reflexes have gone slow, my teeth ache, my eyes constantly scan fuel gauge in car. I have slept sleepless nights in hot weather waiting for water, gas and electricity. I have caught heat stroke many a times waiting endless hours for public transport. I have cursed government countless times while taking my mother to hospital above all I have yet to find a job in last five years; yet I am happy and proud.

I have this notion of superiority among nations of the world for the reason that my country has proved all of them wrong, it is not a failed state, it is not a rogue country, it is poor yet it has strength in institutions to weather out these rough five years with a constitution. At time when Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan all have drowned in the current of history, only my country stand fast. When in last five years there have been constant riots in Europe over inflation and high cost of living and eating only my country had surplus food grains.

I want to highlight the positive aspects, I in five years or for that matter even in last 49 years of my life have never seen anyone dying of hunger here. One can talk at length of failures and shortcomings in last five years but these are times of joy and happiness. An assembly completing its term is not a big deal in western world but in Asian and more specific in Muslim perspective it is an achievement.

For last five years every night and day the prophets of doom the media channels had only one harp to play; assemblies would not be able to complete its tenure, the country is incapable of doing so, politicians are corrupt, institutions have gone down the drains. There were talk of revolution, coup and so on. All these were mental bombardment of depression.

To me this event is just like a mountaineer reaching the summit, it matters nothing to a bystander, as to what one can gain in reaching the summit of a peak, yet one has to see the perspective from mountaineer's eye to understand the joy. The sense of accomplishment.

There is another perspective, what would have happened if the assemblies had failed to reach and complete their term. Would that would have brought a river of happiness and wealth?, load shedding, poverty, lawlessness would have been cured?. Answer is no {media will be having a different answer}

I was too young in 1970 to remember any thing worthwhile about those elections. I was six years old and living in a village near Gujranwala, all I remember is that there was a buzz in the air and two names strike my mind one of Bhutto and other of Maudoodi. My family was supporting a Maudoodi candidate near Daska who was also running a hospital. But I think we toddlers were all supporting Bhutto, don't ask me the reason but I think it had something to do with the election symbol and catchy slogans.

1977 elections I remember clearly because I was in class 7<sup>th</sup> in Karachi and still had no idea of political science but it seems to be a big event. I along with my family saw the 1<sup>st</sup> March political procession of Pakistan National Alliance in Karachi near Nursery. It was huge and disgusting because very lewd and rude remarks and slogans were passed about the wife of Bhutto. The Bhutto procession I think took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1977 which I missed. In the school our teacher once asked us to write her down all the political slogans which we have encountered just for her own political enlightenment.

BBC played a key role in that era. Azam Basti in Defence Society Karachi was the place for our daily shopping of grocery and apparently all were anti Bhutto, they would be sitting at corners and discussing what has been transmitted last night on 'Sairbeen'.

By next elections in 1989 I was an officer in army and as such it was an education, we all were I think anti Bhutto mainly due to ten long years of military propaganda. In the morning while going to aviation school from the mess there were heated debates on the merits of muslim league and demerits of people's party regime in case if it comes to power. Then a string of elections took place in next decade and half. Most fright full being the last one in 2007 when I was on leave pending retirement.

I am looking forward to coming elections for the very reason that it is enhancing my ego as a Pakistani, I am confident that these elections will be fair and peaceful, it will leave a better imprint on my children's mind and personality than what was left on me.